

THE
GOOD MASTERS
PLEA,
AGAINST
THE EVILL SERVANTS
CAVILL.

Discovering the vanity of those
men, who judge the Service of God
to be vaine.

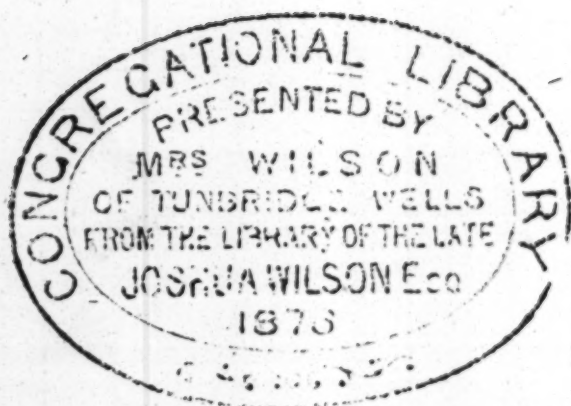
Delivered in certaine Sermons upon
MALACHI, 3. 14.

Being a taste of the labours of that reverend, faith-
full, and holy servant of God, *Nicholas Stanton*,
M. of Arts; late Preacher of the Gospel of
Christ, at the Parish of *Margarets* in
Ipswich, in *Suffolk*.

MALACHI, 1. 10.

*Who is there even among you that would shut the
doores for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine
Altar for nought.*

LONDON,
Printed for *William Weekely*, and are to be
sold at his shop at *Ipswich*, and *Iohn*
Rothwell at the Signe of the Fountaine
and *Sunne* in *Pauls Church-*
yard. 1650.



1



TO

The Right Worshipfull
the Bayliffes, Burgeifes,
with the rest of the in-
habitants of the
Towne of
IPSWICH,

And in particular, to
the Authors Christian
Auditors.

Worthy, and well-esteemed friends,

THat generall, and
good respect, which
the *author* of this *treatise*,
found amongst you,
whilst he was *living*,
hath well perswaded us,

A 2

that

that the *reviving*, of any *little piece* of his, would be very *welcome* after his *death*.

2 King. 13.
21.

The restoring of a *dead man to life*, by the *touch* of the *Prophet's bones*, was an *extraordinary*, (and indeed, no lesse then a *miraculous*) putting forth, of the *power of God*; and therefore, *no sufficient ground*, for the common *preserving*, (much lesse, for the *superstitious adoring*,) of the *bodily reliques*, of *Saints* departed.

Yet we must needs *ac-*
know-

knowledge, *that* great
reviving, which many
drooping hearts, have
found, and felt, by the
Spirituell reliques, of
Gods faithfull servants,
in workes of this nature;
as it holds forth, a sweet
manifestation of the
Grace of God, going a-
long with the *endea-*
vours of his servants; so,
is it no lesse *warrant*, for
the *preserving*, and *pub-*
lishing, such *Posthumies* as
these, whereby the *au-*
thors, being dead, doe yet
speake, and (after a sort)
out-live themselves; put-

Heb. 11. 4.

Job. II. 16

Io. II. 23,
24.

ting also a kind of *new life* , into their *dearest friends* who (being most deeply affected with their *death*,) could have found in their hearts, to have said with *Thomas*, (if the will of the Lord had beene so,) *let us also goe, that we may dye with him* : I say, the *resurrection* of their *labours* [before hand,] (which did seeme to have been *buried* with them,) doth not a little *revive* their friends, and is *next in comfort* to the *resurrection* of their *Bodies* [at the last

last day,] or to the assurance of the *happy condition* of their *Soules*, in the *meane time*.

For this cause, wee were not a little encouraged, to bring this *child of light*, into publike *view*; being well assured, that all such as *loved the parents*, will be very *glad* to see the *face* of it; And, if it should happen (which is the sad case of many a *poor Orphan*) to meet with hard usage, from the *hands*, and *tongues* of such, as use to shew *little kin-*
A 4 *nesse*,

1 *Thes.* 4.
13. 14. &c.

nesse, either to the *living*,
or to the *dead*; we make
no question but that
great Lord Protector,
whose *service* it plead's
for, will also plead for it;
and (under him) we are
bold to commit it to
your care, and patronage.

The *work* it selfe, speaks
much of the *mind*, and
spirit of him, that com-
pos'd it; and is like the
sweet sent of a *perfuming*
Candle, which continues
a great while after the
Candle it selfe is put
forth, and removed out
of the roome. It is a
worke

work fit for *these times*, wherein the eyes of too many professors, are so dazzled with *looking up* to their *priviledges*, they know not how to *looke downe* to their *duties*.

Heb. 13. 2.

The author was (like Moses) a *faithfull Servant* in the *house of God*; and wee are perswaded his maine designe was, to draw *Others* (also) from the *vassalage of Satan*, to the *service of God*; in which *worke*, God hath crown'd his *endeavours* with so many *seales of his ministry*, (as well a-

Act. 26. 18.

Phil. 4. 1.

1 Cor. 9. 2.

A 5 mongst

Luk. 19.
40.

Mat. 3.9.

mongst your selves, as in other places) that if wee should hold our peace, many stony hearts, (converted into flesh, and made children of Abraham,) would speake to the praise of Gods grace, in this usefull instrument.

1 Cor. 15.
33.

In the opening, and applying of this Scripture, hee hath notably discovered, the vanity of those men, who judge it a vaine thing, to serve God. It is most true, that evill words, (much more evill principles in the heart,) doe corrupt good manners. The

The *activity*, or, *inactivity* of men [*outwardly*,] doth most certainly spring, from *internall principles*, most deeply rooted, and closely rivetted, in their *spirits*: amongst the rest, a world of hurt is done, by this *one common*, and hurtfull principle in the *World*, [*it is in vaine to serve God.*]

What makes men, either so desperately *Active*, for the worst of *Masters*, or so shamefully *inactive*, for the best; but this secret *perswasion*,
that

Gal. 5. 8.

*that commeth not of him,
that calleth them?*

Psa. 20. 27.

Now, wee know, a *disease*, clearly *discovered*, in the *cause*, is in the high-way of *cure*. The wisdom, and spirituall skil, of this heavenly *physitian*, hath much appeared in this kind; who by the *candle of the Lord*, hath made *so deep search* into the *privy Chambers* of the Soul, and most *inward* thoughts of men, that, by the cleare discovery, of the *guil*, and *self-deceit* of their hearts in the *service* of God, they

they might be through-
ly *convinced* of the error
of their wayes, and so
the *secrets of their hearts*
being made manifest, they
might fall downe on their
faces, and worship God, re-
porting that God is in his
Ordinance of a truth.

If the communica-
ting these labours, may
(through Gods blessing)
conduce to that happy
end, (as, wee are assured
it was the maine ayme of
this faithfull Stevvard,
in preaching of them) so
we hope, it shall be our
utmost end, in the publi-
shing thereof. For

I Cor. 14.
25.

Eph. 3. 14.

1 Cor. 3. 6.

Isa. 45. 19.

For this cause, we desire to bow our knees unto the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ; and to begge of you, that the Authors Plantation, may be watered by your Prayers, and teares also, that God giving the increase, his name may have the Glory, of all that Service, which is done in obedience to his commands, and his poore servants may enjoy the comfort, of all his precious promises, who never said to the seed of Iacob, seeke ye me in vaine.

By the grace, and in the
the

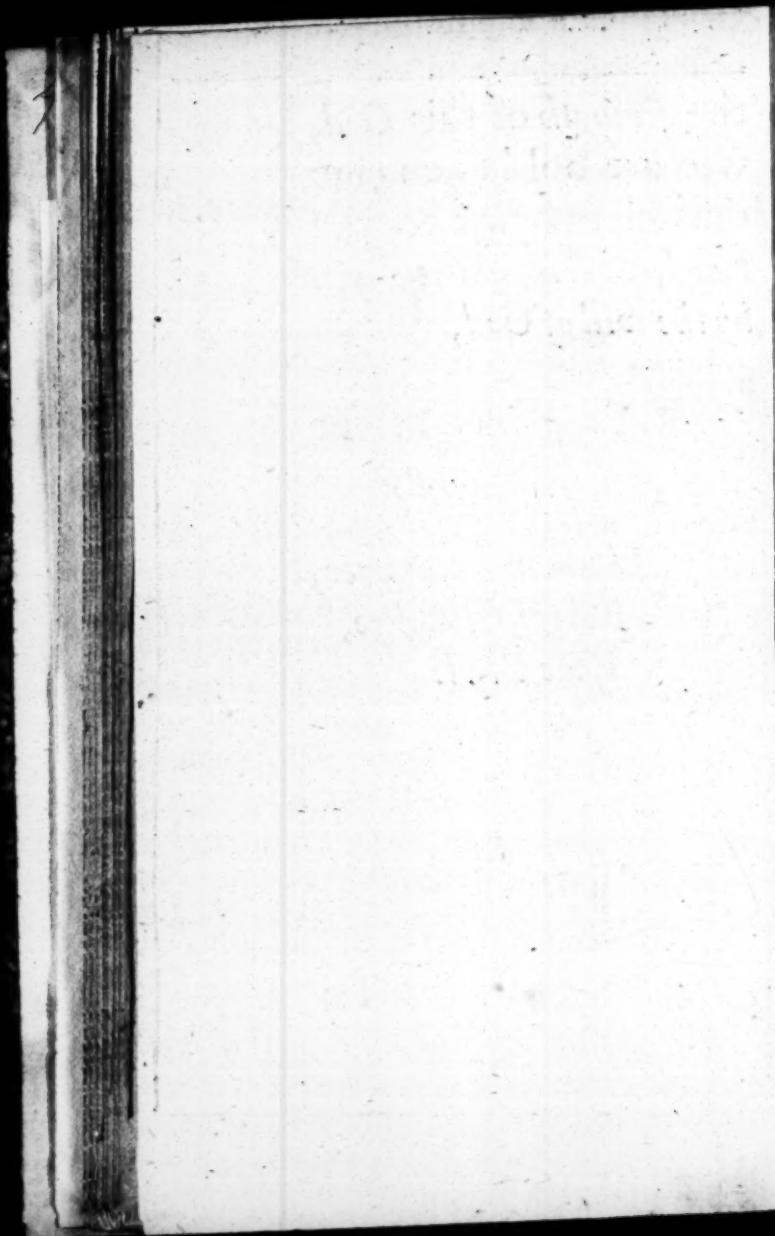
the *strength* of this *God*,
wee are bold to engage
our selves, *first* to the
Lord, and *then* unto you
by the *will* of *God*,

2 Cor. 8. 5.
4, 5.

Your Servants for
Jesus sake,

Matthew Lawrence,
Robert Stansbye,
Isaac Basil.

To





To the Reader.

Christian Reader,

THou shalt finde,
1 Sam. 14. 18. Ab-
solon having no son to
keep his name in re-
membrance, he set up a
Pillar; *this* Godly Au-
thor, (*whose modesty was*
far enough of from affecta-
tion of Printing as all know,
that knew him) having no
naturall issue, (*though*
spiritually he brought
forth

forth many sonnes and
daughters unto God) his
Pious Consort (while o-
thers are building Sepul-
chers to their fathers and
Husbands) erects him this
Pillar and Monument;
both for matter, & form,
of his own providing &
hewing, by the help of
Gods spirit while he lived;
a Monument more lasting
then that of Brasse and
Marble: It was found in
his study, written out with
his own hand (by importu-
nity of a friend) for pri-
vate use; but as the wine
was found in the Clu-
ster

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hile o.
sepul-
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ster of Grapes, and one
said destroy it not, there
is a blessing in it; so such
as saw it, much desired the
publication of it; And his
Toak-fellow (it being a
Phoenix springing out of
his ashes, and the true child
of such a father) durst not
(with the carelesse Mo-
ther) suppress and smother
it, but call in help, to hand
it forth for Publike use,
(which else had been stil-
borne, and never seene the
light,) that so he might
live though dead, and
that lasting Posterity might
rise up and call him bles-
fed.

Isa. 65. 8.

1 King. 3.
19.

honey dropped and lay upon the ground, and Saul had kept the People by an Oath from eating; but Jonathan coming, and tasting thereof with the end of his rod, was much revived and refreshed, blaming his father for restraining the people; surely the people under this godly mans ministry, were brought to a place of much honey, where the word dropped abundantly, and was sweeter then honey, and the honey-combe, where many a fainting and weary soule was cheered, and comforted;

forted; and you that do but
taste (as with the end of a
rod) how good and gracious
the Lord is, by this little
piece of him (who other-
wise was abundant in
labours) will lay blame
(some-where) that you are
kept from more of it, (you
will find such sweetnesse in
it) and thinke the Church
hath wrong that she wants
any of her treasure; but be
assured (Reader whoever
thou art) that no Ananias
and Sapphira-like spirit
hath held any of it back,
but (that which hath been
a cause why the labours of
many

Gen. 38.
29.

many godly Ministers have
been buried with them) a
necessity from the closenesse
and shortnesse of his notes
and hand, which have
made it not onely difficult,
but almost impossible to
Mid-wife them into the
world; and if any imper-
fect Copy should be thrust
forth, the breach be up-
on them; Know it comes
not polished from the Au-
thors pen, and is of quicker
delivery, then that any
skilful hand could come at
it. His spent paines and la-
bours (together with him-
self) are now with the Lord,
funding,

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them) a
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finding (what here he hath
taught) that his labour
was not in vaine in the
Lord ; he was a burning
and a shining light while
he lived, a workman that
needed not be ashamed, and
this his work will praise
him in the Gates ; it car-
ries its own letters of
commendation, and if
thine eye be single, to judge
righteous judgement, thou
wilt find it full of heart-
breaking, conscience-con-
vincing, and soule-incoura-
ging truths, in plaine and
familiar, (but heavenly
and spiritual) dresse : and
while

while others are busie in
tying and untying knots
spending time in the brab-
bles and disputes of the
times, which tend to
strife, rather then godli-
nesse, this holy servant of
God, throwes out the di-
sputer of this world, and
like a good Spie, .or Seer,
he brings, and maintaines a
good report, of the
good old way of serving
God; And though, possi-
bly, there may not be wan-
ting some, that may call
them low and legall things,
not savouring (as they use
to say) of the Gospell spirit
of

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of these times ; to such we
answer ; as Moses had his
Jannes and Jambres ; and
Paul met with some , that
had a forme of Godli-
nesse but denyed the
power thereof : men of
corrupt minds that
withstood the truth ; so
it may now fall out : but if
thou hast a spirit of love,
and of a sound mind ,
and hast been nourished up
in the words of faith, and
of good doctrine, which
thou hast continually fol-
lowed, exercising thy selfe
unto godlinesse, thou wilt

B eat

Exod. 17.

11.

2 Tim. 3. 5.

& 8.

2 Tim. 1. 7.

1 Tim. 4. 6,

7.

eat and blesse God, and
blesse his counsell; thou
wilt find it very profitable,
if the fault be not thine
owne; eat, and digest the
roll, and let it be sweet in
thy belly, and despise not
the day of small things;
pray that the Lord of the
harvest, would thrust
forth more such labou-
rers, and that he would
teach, and tell thee how
vaine all things else are,
but to serve God, and that
godlinesse onely is true
gaine: and if any man
teach otherwise, and con-
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that is according to god-
lineffe, he is puffed up, and
knoweth nothing, but
doteth about questions,
and strife of words, from
whence cometh envy,
strife, railings, evil surmi-
sings, froward disputati-
ons of men of corrupt
minds, destitute of the
truth, which think that
gaine is godlineffe, from
such turn away. But lest
we unmannerly make thee
stand too long at the door,
ere wee bid thee come into
the house, we beg thy pra-
yers*

yers, and are thine in the
service of the Gospell.


Matthew Lawrence,
Robert Stansbye,
Isaac Basil.



THE
GOOD MASTERS
PLEA,
AGAINST
THE EVILL SERVANTS
CAVILL.

MALACHI, 3. 14.

*Ye have said, it is vaine to
serve God.*

 He Author, and
Pen man, of this
Book, (being the
last of the first
Testament) was the Pro-
phet *Malachi*; who was one
C of

of those (even the last of those) three Prophets, that the Lord raised up for the help of his Church, and benefit of his people, after that long and sore captivity which they had been in, and now but newly delivered out of : and though they had been in a *hot furnace*, yet were they *not purged from their drosse*. There were *two sinnes* which the Prophet doth now especially charge upon them.

1. *Slighting of Gods Services, and Ordinances.*

2. *Cavilling at his wayes, and speeches.*

Strange sins to be found, especially, in *such* a people, at *such* a time :

It might wel have bin expected from this people, especially

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against the evil servants cavil.

3

ally now, coming solately out
of such sore troubles, that
they should have *laid their
hands upon their monthes*, and
have *justified* the Lord in all
his proceedings; that they
should have been even *hun-
gry* of offering Sacrifice, and
glad of opportunity to have
done *God service*; resolving
after this manner; well, see-
ing the Lord hath been so
good to us, as *to deliver us,
out of the hands of our enemies*,
we wil resolve, *to serve him,
in holinesse, and righteousness*,
all the remnant of our daies;
and seeing we have wanted,
our former opportunities of
doing God service, and of-
fering him sacrifice, but
have them (now) restored
us againe, we will now dou-
ble our diligence, time, cost,
C 2 and

and paines, in serving of him.

These, and the like expressions, might well have been expected to have come from this people, as, from such as come out of affliction; but as it is nothing thus with many *others*, so neither was it with *these*; which were not onely soone weary of Gods service *themselves*, but (in their hearts at least) condemned it, as fruitlesse and unprofitable for *any others*, for which (as here) they are reprov'd; *ye have said, it is vaine to serve God.*

These words are an answer, to their cavil, or a fresh accusation, and reply upon their stout selfe-justifications in the former words, *verse 13. What have we spoken*
so

so much against thee? Divers doctrines the words afford, — as 1. That Carnal hearts are full of proud cavils at Gods wayes, Mat. 25. 24. &c. 2. That the Lord takes notice what hard thoughts men have of himselfe, and his wayes.

But letting them passe, observe this.

That carnall hearted people doe judge the serving of God in exactnesse, to be but a vaine thing; or, that, they account the true service of God, to be but a vaine service.

Dott.

1. I say carnal hearts doe thus judge, [*ye have said;*] The Lord did not intend to charge all this people with this crime, nor yet any of those, whose hearts were upright with him, for they

C 3 esteemed

esteemed far otherwise of the service of God ; as appeared by their practice in the 16. *verse* ; onely, he intended, such as were in outward covenant with him, who though they were [*in*] Israel, were not [*of*] Israel : Againe, I adde, that they judge the *exa^t* serving of God to be vaine : they will acknowledge a necessity of serving God (take it in their way and fashion) they will give it in charge to their children, and servants, when they goe to bed ; Sirs, have a care and serve God, if you doe not serve God, he wil not blesse you, &c. But to be so *exa^t*, and precise, in serving of God, to be so strict in keeping of his Ordinances, and in *walking*
mourne-

mournefully before the Lord of Hosts, (as these words are partly expounded by those that follow them) this way of serving the Lord, is every where spoken against by Carnall hearts, as here. It is vain to serve God.

Nay, it wil be no hard thing to prove, that to *serve God at all*; or that the service of God *in general*, is held by them, to be but a *vaine thing* and if *this* be proved, the *other* wil follow much more, as being included therein: and this is the thing that I shal first endeavour, for the further conviction of carnal hearts, that hereby they may see themselves, and their conditions. True, it may be they wil not beleeve it, and it may be they

doe not thinke, that they thinke so; but, they doe not know their hearts, as the *Psalmist* said of those wicked men *Psal. 49. 11.* that their inward thought is so, and so. viz. that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations, &c. — He seems to distinguish, betweene thought and thought, an outward and an inward thought, their uppermost thought, that lies next the understanding, and conscience, [and that is otherwise,] but there is another thought, that lies beneath and under this, which they know not themselves [and that is, thus, that, it is in vaine, to serve God.] The truth of this is proved from *Iob. 21. 15.* what is the almighty

ty we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray to him? and from *Isay* 58.3. wherefore have we fasted and thou seeest it not? wherefore have we afflicted our soule and thou takest no knowledge? And it is further cleared, and confirmed, by these evidences, or evidenced by these particulars.

1. By their wilfull and totall omission of some known required duties, so (except it be some strait-laced hypocrite one of a thousand) there is not a carnal heart to be found, but may be taken tardy this way.

The *Pharisees*, as strict as they were, yet lived in the constant omission of known required duties; and those of the chiefest sort: where-

C5 upon

upon our Saviour told them, that, *these things they ought to have done*, being things of most weight.

Mark 7. 8.

And that they laid aside the commandement of God.

As a man buying a large bargaine, doth pick, and choose, when he comes at that which doth not like him, hee layes it aside, and wil none of it; this is not good, saith he, I doe not like this. So did they, and so doe all carnal hearts; when a Commandement from God comes at them requiring a duty, which they doe not like, they lay such a Commandement aside, as if it were an uselesse Commandement, *that it were in vaine* to obey such a commandement, that either no
reward

reward would come in for keeping that Commandement, or not enough to counterwaile that paines, and losse, that would follow upon the keeping and obeying of it.

And this is evidence cleare enough, to prove, that in their hearts, they thinke, that the *whole service of God is in vaine*; for did they thinke otherwise of the service in generall, they would thinke otherwise, of the severall acts, and parts of the service; did they really beleieve, that there were reward in keeping of any of Gods Commandements, they would also beleieve a reward for keeping all, and every one.

And therefore, as he that breaketh

breaketh wilfully, and constantly, *one point of the Law*, is guilty of the breach of the *whole Law* : so, they that are guilty of judging the service of the Lord vaine in *any one particular*, are guilty of Judging it so to be, in the *generall*.

They then that doe omit, and neglect, prayer in the *morning*, doe in their hearts think it in vaine to pray in the *evening*, &c.

Others there are, that wil choose to do things that are *vaine*, rather then be imployed in any part of Gods service; how wil they spend their time? some *playing*, others *sleeping* and *ideling* away their time, doing either *nothing*, or that, that is *next to nothing*, and worse *then*

then nothing, rather then serve God: is not this a cleer case, that these people doe think it to be *vaine to serve God*, or else they would not doe, as they doe.

Secondly, the truth in hand, appeareth, by their *slighty performing* of those duties that they doe undertake; dealing with God *deceitfully*, as they in *Acts* 5. 1. 2. and turning the Lord off with any thing, as these people reprov'd in the text; of whom see *Chap. 1. 13.* *ye brought that which was torne, lame, and sick, saith the Lord:* when they had a beast that was worried, baited, and bitten, that it was in danger to miscarry, and dye; or good for little or nothing, that, they brought and offer'd

Mal. 13.

fer'd in sacrifice. Yea? wil the Lord put us to such cost, and charge? and must we of necessity offer him so many sacrifices? is there no shift for it? &c.

Well, wee'l come off as *good cheap* as we can, he shal have the very worst wee have, those that are worth least to be sold, wil we offer: now their offering *such* sacrifices as these, shew'd that in their hearts they thought it *in vaine* to offer *any* at all; that they were but lost, and cast away, for, had they believed that the Lord would have *rewarded* them for their services, and satisfied them fully for their Sacrifices, that they should not have been losers by any thing that they had offered,

offered, he should then have had the very *best* that they had; knowing that the *better* any thing is that they offer to God, the *greater* is the reward that God will give to them for it. For this will make a soule free for God; As *David*, who knowing what a bountiful paymaster the Lord was, would not offer him sacrifice, of that which should cost him nothing.

— Why? just thus, doe carnal hearts in doing the Lord service (as these people did in offering him sacrifice) they bring him the *torn, blind, and lame*.

Yea, is there no help, but I must doe *duties* heare, pray, repent, give almes, and the like; wel then, Il'e shift as as wel as I can; if I must
beare

2 Sam. 24.
24.

heare, I'll hear at my leisure,
when I have little else to
doe.

If I *must* give, it shal be of
that which I got by *usury*,
bribery, or the like.

If I *must* pray in my family,
it shal be the *last* thing I doe
immediately before I goe to
bed, being half asleep and
halfe awake. If I *must* repent,
I wil doe it when I am *ready*
to dye, and goe out of the
world, when I feel the house
crack, and it be ready to
tumble downe about my
eares, then wil I seeke out
for another habitation: and
so for other duties.

This is the practice of car-
nal hearts, thus to turn the
Lord off with the *worst*,
which is a cleare evidence
against them, that they
Judge

against the evil servants cavil.

17

Judge his service, to be but
vaine service.

Thirdly, this truth may
be evidenced, by their *weari-
nesse* in their serving the
Lord, though in a slighty
and formal manner; as
this people in that place be-
fore named, are charged
with this very thing, *ye
have said, what a wearinesse is
it, and yee have sunffed at it.
&c.*

3.

Malac. i.
13.

And thus are carnal hearts
soonest weary; though in some
regard they have by far the
least cause.

Of all men, one would
thinke, that *these people*,
should not be *weary* of ser-
ving the Lord, that are at
so little paines, and cost, and
so formal therein.

It might rather be thought,
that

that the *people of God*, which doe so put out themselves, and spend their spirits in the service of the Lord, that they, should rather be *weary*, then such as are *slighty*, and formal therein, turning the Lord off with lip-labour, and bodily exercise. And it is true indeed, if wearinesse in the service of God, did arise from the *expence of Spirits*, then the *godly* should be sooner *weary*, then those that are *carnall*; but, indeed, this is not the cause of it; but rather, a *dislike* of the service it selfe, from an indisposition in the heart (being *carnal*) to a duty, or service, that is of a *spirituall* nature; hence it is, that the people of God (who love the service of God) after such

such time as they have been much with God in the duties of his service, and have both wearyed their bodies, and wasted their strength and spirits, yet *delighting in the Law, and Service of God after the innerman*, are not yet weary of the duty or service it selfe, but wish that they had fresh strength and Spirits. For it is one thing, to be weary *in* the service of God, and another thing to be weary *of* the service of God.

The *first* may befall a *gracious heart*, or child of God, but the *latter* is the property of those that are onely *car-nall*.

And againe, there is much difference betweene that wearisomnesse, that ariseth from

from *inabilities* to hold out any longer in the duty or service, and that which springeth from a *dislike* of the duty or service it selfe; both in the *affections*, from that contrariety that is in the heart (being carnal) to the duty or service (as spiritual,) as also, in the *judgement*, from secret feares and thoughts of losing its labour, and so being in vaine.

The carnal heart is weary of the service of God in this *last* manner, as wel as in the *first*; and that upon this last ground also, whereby the truth in hand is evidenced.

4.

Fourthly, it is clearly evidenced: that they think the service of God in vaine.

By those *base and hard thoughts*

thoughts which they secretly harbour, of such as serve God *more*, and better then themselves ; this is a thing very commonly found in carnal hearts, (and who wil serve God a little) to be bitter in censuring of them that serve him *much*, those that keep *their* times and go *their* pace and are of *their* Last and straine, they can like wel enough.

But such as exceed them, they suspect for *too much* nicenesse ; what ? wil not *common* Prayers please them ? but they must have *conceived* Prayer ? wil not praying with *others*, and in the family suffice ? but they must Pray *alone*, and in their closets ? wil not *one* Sermon a day content them ? but they

they must hear *all* day long
and are not Sermons on the
Sunday sufficient, but they
must run to Sermons, and
Lectures in the *week* too?
&c. Thus condemning the
generation of the righteous,
and such as are better then
themselves.

These thoughts and speeches proceed from carnal hearts, which conceive in themselves, that the service of God is altogether *in vaine*: for, if they did really beleeve, that it were good, and profitable to serve God a little, then it would follow even by the rule of common reason, that it is much better to serve him *more*, and so still the *more*, the better.

Take a man which belee-
veth, that such a *worke* or
Trade

Trade is gainfull, and profitable, though he *himselfe* cannot work, or earne that way, by reason of age, or infirmities, yet wil not hee condemne *those* that can, and doe; but wil blesse them and their condition; wishing that he were in the same, himself. Alas (saith he) I am grown old, my sight and strength decayes, that my work is gone, I can make no earnings but lose my time, &c.

Oh, but such, or such, they are happy, for they can work, and earne; I am glad that *others* can, though I cannot; but I would I could work, for I know it is profitable worke, and wil bring in great advantage to him that labours in it, whereas
another,

another, it may be, slights that work, and trade, and condemnes *them* of folly, that follow it most: and all out of ignorance, and that, because they thinke it, to be but labour in vaine. Thus it is concerning the *service of the Lord*, and the trade of godlinesse, those that are truly godly wil rejoyce that *others* serve God, and can do it better then *themselves*. I am a poore ignorant creature, a dwarfe and a nurling and grow very slowly, but I am glad to see *others* grow: *my Spirit* is straitned, and bound up, but *others* are large hearted for God, and God lets out himselfe to *others*, though he be a stranger to *my Soule*; I am hard hearted, and cannot mourn
for

for my own, or others sins;
and for the afflictions of
Gods Church, and people ;
which I, ought to doe, but
cannot ; Oh, but *such*, or
such, they can doe these
things; wel: blessed be God,
I am glad that *any body* can
doe thus. Oh ! that I could
do so too; this is an evidence
of a gracious heart, that
knowes the service of God
to be a *profitable service*;
but on the contrary, such as
speak, or think *otherwise*,
as formerly was said, they
think the service of God to
be but a *vaine service*, and
this doth clearly evidence
their hearts to be but *carnall*.

Thus for the *prooffe* of the
Doctrin, now follow the
Grounds of Reasons, why car-
nal hearts doe Judge the
D *service*

1 Reason.

service of God to be but vaine.

The first is, because they make question, whether there be any such Lord to serve or no, for (as *Psalm. 14.* 1. *The foole hath said in his heart there is no God,* so) many such there be even amongst us, who though they doe not verbally deny it, yet they doe not really and cordially beleieve it; for though this be one of those *morall principles* that are engraven upon the heart of man by nature, which can never be utterly blotted out, yet (as others, so) this lies up as a *dead principle* in the Soule, and stirs little till it be enlivened; and then, they making question, whether there be such a God to serve or no, no marvaile though they

they judge, and condemne
the service of that God to be in
vain, when the worshippers
of Baal spent much time, and
paines in praying, offering of
sacrifice, and cutting them-
selves with Knives and Lan-
cers, and continued thus do-
ing all the day, from mor-
ning till noone, and from
noone till night, the Prophet
that stood by, mockt at them,
and derided them; and the
reason why he did so, was,
because he knew that there
was no such God, as they fee-
med to serve, none such to
hear, and help, as they call'd
and cried unto; and that
therefore what they did was
in vaine. Now that which
Elijah the true servant of the
true God, did to those
Priests, servants, and wor-
shippers

shippers of *Baal* : the servants of *Baal*, of the world and sinne, doe to the servants of the true God, and that upon the selfe same ground (though they be mistaken.) When these carnall hearted creatures, and atheisticall spirits, look upon the faithfull servants of God, and see what time they spend, and what paines they take, in the service of the Lord, *calling and crying* to the Lord by fervent Prayer, *culting*, I meane rending and tearing their hearts, *by repentance, and humiliation* : and that so long, and constantly from the morning of their youth, to the noon tide of their manhood, and from the noone tide of their middle age, till the

the evening of their life, &c. where *carnall hearts* behold these things (I say) they secretly *mock* at the servants of God, for doing thus, as thinking in their hearts, that their *labour* is but *lost*, and in *vaine*; because they make question whether there be *any such God* to serve or no, which if there were not, then it were *in vaine* indeed, and though there *be*, yet they questioning the *truth* of it, these things must needs seeme *in vaine* to them.

Secondly, They thinke the service of the Lord to be a *vaine service*, because tis *in vaine* to them, they are never the better for any of Gods service, which they doe, and therefore they think that *no body else is*; they get nothing

2 Reason.

at the *table* of the Lord, nor at the *throne* of grace, but come away as dead hearted, with their corruptions as strong, and they continuing as ignorant of the mysteries of Christ and life, and as unable to pray, or doe God any service, as formerly; and therefore it being thus with *them*, they thinke, it is thus with *every body else*, yea, that there is no such *good*, as men speake of, to be gotten in any part of Gods service. And the truth is, they *dare* do no *otherwise*, then give entertainment, to these kind of thoughts. (being suggested to them by Satan) hereby to prevent that *condemning sentence*, which their *own consciences*, would be ready to passe upon them, for their

nor but ted, s as aing eries un- d a- and with thus that men na- And o no ter- d of sted y to sen- sci- to heir un-

unprofitablenesse in Gods service. For should they admit of this for a truth, that there were *so much good* to be got in duties, and ordinances, then would *conscience* be upon them, and demand why *they* do then get *no more good* thereby, and so make them call into question the *truth*, and uprightnesse of their *hearts*, and the *manner* of their performing duties, and doing of God service. Which to prevent, as also to save themselves in the *esteeme of others* (so farre as they can) they cast this *imputation*, upon the *service of God* it selfe. As it is the practice of some servants, that having wasted their *wages* by some riotous courses, or secret haunts of ex-

Simil.

pence, to save their *credits* with their friends, and such as would else be ready to tax them, for ill husbandry, in comming away without clothes on their backs, or money in their purse, they, to save their credit, and avoid blame, unjustly accuse, that *service* they dwelt in, & say that it is a stroying and wasting service, [much work, and little wages,] that there is nothing to be gotten in it, and the like; thinking thereby, to scape free from blame, which (is true) they may doe, with *those* that know not the service, but not with *those* that know how good and profitable a service it is.

Thus doe carnall hearts, with the *service* of God, and the

the duties of it, thinking, and saying, it is but *vaine*, to save themselves; and whereas, they cannot deny, but that *some others*, doe thrive, and grow better, and more then *themselves*, they will not acknowledge this, to be, from the *duties* of Gods service, but rather from *some other thing*: as for instance, when they see *others* grow in knowledge, and parts, whilst *themselves* remaine, still grossely ignorant, they will not acknowledge, that they got this, by attending upon the *meanes*, and *ordinances*, but rather impute it, to good education, to the strength of their *memories*, and other abilities of their *own*; when they see *others* have gotten power over

their passions, and corruptions, whilst *they* remaine still hare-braind, and furious upon every slight occasion, that the wagging of a straw, will make them off the hookes, and make them little better then Bedlams, they will not ascribe any such grace, to be power received from *Iesus Christ*, through any ordinance, but rather to the goodnesse of *their natures*. Oh, *they* are of a more *milde disposition* then I am of, *my nature* is hasty, I cannot help it, &c.—Nay, rather then they will take shame to *themselves*, they will lay the blame upon *God*, if for want of a true change in the *heart*, they remaine without the spirit of *God*, and the spirit of *supplication*,
that

that they are still children, and babes, & cannot speak in Prayer, further then what they have gotten from others; then wil they *excuse themselves*, and say, that God doth *not give* the spirit of Prayer to every one alike; not considering that *promise*, of Gods giving his holy spirit, to them that aske it, meaning aright; it is granted, that he doth *not give it alike to all* his people, but yet he gives it *so to all*, as it will be quickly *discernable* to them that have it, even this way, as many other wayes beside.

A third ground or reason of carnall peoples Judging thus of the *service of God*, as if it were *in vaine*, is, because they see many of *these*, very

3 Reason.

very negligent, and carelesse herein, whom they much admire; great ones, and learned ones, whom they Judge to be so wise, that they cannot be thus mistaken.—

And therefore, when they see them carelesse in the duties of Gods service, that either they use no prayer, nor duties in their families, or but seldome, or if constantly, yet but in a slighty formall way; (so for hearing the word and other duties, &c.) They begin to thinke, surely, these things are not so needfull, this same serving of God in this manner, is not so profitable, for if it were, certainly such and such learned men and great Schollers, (that should know better what belong to it then so,) they

would not omit these things as they doe: thus as the Apostle saith of them in *Iude*, that they had some mens persons in admiration, so some mens Judgements, and Practices, are had in admiration, and followed as unerring patterns, and the judgements, and examples of these men, are more to them, then all the precepts of God, not considering that of the Apostle *1 Cor. 1. 26.* not many wise, or great, or noble, are called.

The fourth Reason, why carnall hearts Judge the service of God a vaine service - is, because, the Lord doth many times deferre the paying of his servants wages, for the service which they do, for him, till afterwards. —

God

4 Reason

God doth not give them outward prosperity, it may be at all; and no marvell, because as *his Kingdome, is not of this world*, so neither shall his *servants* live, as in a *Kingdome* here; nay, it may be, they attaine not, to that inward joy, and peace, which they expect, and shall be sure of, at last; together, with other parts, of their reward; which they are *un- capable of*, whil'st they are here, onely, they must stay, as *those labourers for their penny, till night*; so they for their reward till death.

Mat. 20.

Now carnall people, seeing *nothing coming in*, having *no Bird in their hand*, and wanting faith, to believe, and patience to waite, give it over, as *labour lost*, and paines

paines to no purpose, that is taken in this service, like as in their own doing service, to the Devill, because when they have *sinned*, and God is so patient, as not to *reprove* and punish them, for the *present* they think hee *never* will; so in the doing of good, and serving the Lord, they think, because it is not rewarded for the *present*, therefore it *never* will, though yet the Lord hath bound himselfe, by many *promises*, to reward them; which *bonds* are good *debts*, and the Christians *reversions*, which are better then the worldlings *possessions*.

But here comes an *objection*, in the way, which must be removed, before we can proceed any further; thus
some,

Psal. 50.

Obj.

some, may say, if so many doe think, the service of God to be in vaine, as you say doe, *why* then doe any, that are thus naturall, and carnall, keep Gods service, or doe him any work at all? you will grant, that many which are naturall, and carnall, yet doe much of Gods work, pray, preach, heare, &c.

And if they thought, that all which they did, were in vaine, surely, they would not doe, as they do, to lose labour.

Asw.

I answer, there are divers grounds, and reasons, of their doing God some work, and service, though yet in their hearts they think it to be in vaine, I will instance in two; the one is, that they are haled
and

and forced hereunto, and that they can do no lesse; either, the *examples* of others, or a *habit*, gotten by practice, or *powerfull ordinances*, making way, and work, for an inlightned conscience, not quite benum'd, they are hereby, forced upon that service, of God, which of themselves, they have no love unto; As *two men*, that are *friends*, dwell together, the *one* of them, having much work to doe, calls to the *other*, to come and helpe, happily he will not goe *himself*, but sends in his *man*, now this man, goes to work, not out of any *love* to him, that he goes to work withall, nor yet out of any *hope*, to be the better for working with him, for
he

Simil.

he is agreed with his own Master, and so therefore looks upon all other work as *in vaine*, onely, yet he goes, as *sent* by his own master, and so works for the other, and *dare* doe no lesse; even so it is here, *God* and *conscience* are two friends, and *God* having work to doe, Prayers to make, Sermons to Preach, and heare, or afflictions to suffer, &c. *conscience*, that, being *Gods* friend, sends in its *man* (for many a man is more servant to his *conscience* then he is to *God*) and he falls to this work, yet looking upon it as *in vaine*, and yet can doe no lesse then goe, and work, being *sent*, and forced by the power of his *conscience*, to which he is a *Servant*, and
not

not to *God*, though yet hee doth his *worke*. And there is many a man that if his own *Master* (conscience) would let him *alone*, that he could be quiet, would not do half so much of *Gods work*, as now he doth. But when he goes to bed, like a beast, or abroad in the morning without prayer, *conscience* stuffes his Pillow with Pricks, and doth so hale, gaule him, and disease him, that he cannot be quiet, but it doggs him, and there it baites him; thou hast not beene at prayer, how dar'st thou make such adventures as thou dost? how can'st thou look to bee kept, or blest without seeking *God*? &c. Hereupon, he falls to *work*, and then conscience is *quiet*, and giving

ving him, a little cursed peace, he is *quiet* too, and this wages he hath from his *conscience*, for the work, and duties which he doth ; but as for any reward from *God*, he hath no ground, to looke for any, and yet doth, what he doth, upon this ground. I grant the best of Gods servants are bound to hearken to the voyce of *conscience*, but wicked men are more driven by the lash and accusation of conscience, then drawn to duty by the light thereof.

The other ground, of this their doing God some work, though yet in their hearts, they think that *service* of God to be in *vaine*, is this :

They do it, to make sure *uncertainties* : for though
(for

(for their *own* parts) they be settled in the thoughts, and resolutions, of these things, and think, and say, as the Scripture saies of them, that there is *no God*, or that his service is in vaine, &c.

Yet, either by some powerfull *Sermon*, or upon the generall acknowledgement of the contrary, by *others*, or happily, upon the beholding, of some of *Gods people*, and their carriage, in sickness, and at the approaches of death, how comfortably they lay, and how confident they were, of a liberall reward for their serving of God, &c. Having also some *tast*, and the first fruits of it already: these things make these people begin to doubt, and question, what before, they

they seemed *resolved* of, that many a man comes away, sighing, and saying, within himselfe, well, I am affraid, that if this were *my* condition, that death were coming for *me*, and I were under the hand of God, and so near *my* end, as *such a one* is, I should not be so comfortable as *he* is, but that I should lye like a wild Bul in a net, full of the fury of the Lord, and be at my wits end; & therefore it may be, that I have been *mistaken*, all this while; and for all *this* there may be a God, and there may be some reward in serving of him, &c. and hereupon, he resolves to do *something* in Gods service; well, I will resolve, to pray, hear, &c. More then I have done, that if there be a
God,

God, and there be any reward for his service, I may have something in the Bank, and a comming; — thus thinking to make sure, however things goe.

As you shall have some ignorant hide-bound *Coun- treyman*, that, having no skil, nor experience in *Sea-affaires*, and adventures into forraigne parts, and new plantations, is quite against such kind of trading, when the ship goes out, he gives it for lost, and all that is ventured in it, secretly condemning them for *folly*, [at least.] that have nothing to doe with their moneys, but to make such desperate ventures of it, as these; and yet *this man* hearing, how such a one, and such a one, by

Simil.

by putting in a stock of money, and imploying it that way, were great gainers, and made men for ever, as they say; *this man* at length, and in time, may be brought to make some *venture* himselfe that way; reasoning thus; well, though I have no minde that way, yet I care not, if I venture something at Sea, &c. It may be the ship may return, and some profit may come by it, that if it doth prove so, I may be the better, and save something, but he will not venture *so much* as shall undoe him, if it should miscarry, but what he can easily spare: So it is here, *carnall hearts* though they Judge thus of the service of God, as *uaine*; and that labour as lost, that

is

is taken therein; yet percei-
ving (as before was said)
what *others*, have got there-
by, are hereby brought, to
do *something* for God, think-
ing, that *if there be a God*,
and it be *not in vain* to serve
him, that *something* may
come in, in an evill day;
being so *simple* as not to con-
sider, that God will be ser-
ved aright for the *manner*, as
well as for the *matter*: nei-
ther will they venture *much*
for God, to part with *all* for
the *Pearle*, but onely venture
so farre, as to provide for
themselves, how they may
be *happy* (as they thinke)
without any thing comming
in, this way.

The first use of this Do-
ctrine, is, for *Information*,
and that in many *particulars*,
E first;

Vf. 5.

Use 1. Of
informati-
on.

First ; It *informes* us, of the *reason*, why the Lord hath *no more servants*, to wait upon him, and doe his worke. The *world*, and *sin*, have abundance, but the Lord *very few* ; especially of those that will wear an *intire coat* without seame, or that will venture upon any *hot piece* of service, if they be put upon it ; here is the true ground of it, they doubt whether the *service of God*, be not a *vaine service*, and whether there be, as *good wages*, to be had, for doing of *Gods work*, as they have, from those *Masters*, whom [*now*] they serve, and whose worke they do.

Secondly, It *informs* us, of the ground, of so much *lukewarmnesse*, and indifferency,

rency, as is in many that are, or seeme to be, the servants of God; why? they stubber over the Lords work, and are so slighty in his service, offering him sacrifice, of that which doth cost them little, or nothing; as in praying, hearing, and the like; as if it were no great matter, whether they prayed, or not prayed, whether they heard, or not heard, whether they stood, and appeared for God, or dissembled it; especially, if it come to this, that they cannot follow, and serve God, but it must cost them dear.

Indeed, many can be content to keep Gods service, doe Gods work, and profess religion, so long as this profession, and service, will

maintaine them ; but if it comes to this, that they must maintaine their service, and they cannot professe, and follow God, but it will cost them their estates, credits, liberties, or lives, then they shrink : and here's the reason, they make a question, [if they should disburse so much for God, and in his service] whether ever they should see their own again, and not be losers, by the bargain. This makes them so backward to enter upon some worke, that God puts them upon, and so slightly in that which they doe, that as they that work for bad pay-Masters, when their work is faulted, are ready to answer, why ? tis even well enough, unlesse I were like

Simil.

to be paid better for it, then I am; so doe they here; suspecting the service of God, for a *vain service*, they think the work done in it, to be *well enough*, how *slighty* soever; whereas, did they *believe* otherwise, and the *truth* of those *promises* of God, for his bountifull *rewarding* of such as are his *servants*, it would make them *fruitfull*, and *painfull* in his service.

1 Cor. 15.
58.

Thirdly, It *informs* us, of the ground, of so much *Apostacy*, and backsliding from God, why so many of his *disciples*, and *servants* go *away*, and fall off daily; Yea many ancient standing professors, that seemed to have been good, and faithfull servants, and to have done God

much good work; yet (*now*) after a long time, they carry the Lord his *livery* home againe, and will weare it no longer, nor follow him any further, but are now for a *new Master*, and *that* such a one as the times will serve them to follow, and serve without danger. The ground hereof, is clearly this, they thinke to mend themselves, and to take a course, that will be *more profitable*, then this service would be, if they should continue it.

Heb. 11.
25, 26, 27.

But as *Moses*, endured many, and great afflictions, seeing him [by faith] who is invisible to sense; so, had people hearts, and faith to beleeve the truth of Gods promises, and the profitableness

blenesse of his service, all the world could not be able to hire them out of it, nor any thing in it beat them off, or any whit discourage them. But I would earnestly desire these people, that are *backsliders* from God, to consider, how wonderfully they *provoke* the Lord to displeasure, who thus turne their backs upon him, and give over his service: and indeed, there is just cause, that the Lord should be so displeased: For such a one proclaimes to all the world (in effect) that hee hath found a *better service* then the Lord's; and that it is *better* to serve *sinne*, the world, and the *Deuill*, then to serve *God*; and doth, as if he should say; well friends

Hos. 2. 5.

E 4 heare

heare me, and know my judgement, *Time was*, when I was a slave to my lust, and the world, and had no heart, to any of the duties of God's service, I never cared for prayer, the word, nor any such thing ; and so I spent my twenty, or thirty first yeares ; And *afterward*, (I know not how) going to such a place, where there was a Sermon, I could not choose but goe in, and in hearing my conscience being much stird) I was brought to take *another course*, and then I gave my selfe to pray, heare, read, and the like, and to profess religion ; and thus I have held thus many years ; So that I have *tryed both masters*, and tryed both services ;

ecc; and now I *proclaime* to all the world, that I judge, the service of *sin*, and of the *Devill*, to be better then the *Lord's* service; for I thinke this, to be but a *vaine* service; and therefore, I leave it, and turne (as I hope) to mend my selfe. Now must not the Lord needs, take this *very* ill, at the hands of *such*, as shall thus *disparage* his service in this manner.

The *second* use is for *reproofe*. First, to such as not onely *think* thus, that the service of God is in *vaine*, that a man is never the *better* for it, but *judge* it so *evill*, and conceive a man is much the *worse*; as those in *Ioshua*, to whom it *seemed* *evill* to *serve* the *Lord*; so some think, that such as give themselves

Use 2. Of reproofe.

Iosh. 24. 15.

to pray, and mourne for their sins, that are zealous for God, and forward in the profession of religion are the *worse*; worse in their *health*, worse in their *estates*, worse in their *wits*, and the like. These are a degree above the ordinary sort, of wicked people, and shal fare thereafter: of which see, *Iude*, 15. for God shall come one day to execute judgement upon *ungodly men*, not onely for all their *ungodly deeds*, but for all their *hard speeches* [also] which they have spoken against him.

Secondly, It is of *Reproof*, to such as are guilty of this sinne, in the Text.

And of this sort are many, and multitudes, even of those that (in a formall manner

manner) doe performe many services that the Lord requires; that doe hear, pray, and professe; and yet in their *hearts*, have but *meane*, and *low thoughts* of those duties of Gods service; and looke upon the labour, and paine taken in it, as lost, and in *vaine*.

Let these know, that *they* are guilty of a *sinne*, which the *Devill* himselfe was free from. He said, that *Iob* did not serve God for nought; yet these thinke the service of God to be vaine, and fruitlesse: but howsoever, it is a desperate signe of a carnall heart, and a black brand set upon the *wicked*, by the hand of the spirit of God, whereby all the world may know them to be wicked, where-
ever

Iob. 1. 9.

ever they find it; And they *themselves*, may know themselves so to be, much more; let them be otherwise, never so faire, and formall, yet if they finde this in themselves, it may be conviction enough unto them, that their hearts are carnall, and their conditions desperate. If any body should goe, and raise a report upon you that are Masters, and give *great wages*, that you gave your servants *no wages*; would you take it well at their hands? Yet thus doe you *repart* of Gods service; at least by your *practice*; by your *omitting* of that which God commands, and by your *committing* of that which God forbids, you proclaime, the service of
God,

God, to be nothing worth.

But suppose one should aske you, *how* you can tel that it is in vaine to serve God? you never *tryed* to purpose, what it was to serve him in *sincerity*. If a man should go and report (as before) that you made your servants work for nothing, you would say, *how* can you tell that, seeing you never *tryed* my service? so may I say to such as complaine of the service of God, to be a *vaine service*, *how* can you tel it is so, seeing you never made *tryall* of it, upon your own experience? and therefore you are guilty of *speaking evil of the things which you understand not*.

2 Pet. 2. 12

Thirdly, it is of use (by way of inference) to the people

people of God : For if it be a fault in *carnall* people, much more in such as are *spirituall* ; and yet many of these are much to blame, even about this very thing ; having *strange thoughts* about the *vanity* of Gods service ; & that upon grounds, both from themselves , and others.

I. From *themselves* ; and they are two. The *one* is, the *non-apprehension* of any good gotten by that service that they ever did for God. The *other* is, that *indiscernable difference* [in themselves,] betweene *serving*, and *not serving* of God, *performing*, and *omitting* the duties of Gods service.

For the better settling of the people of God, in his

wayes, and service; these grounds of their mistakings, must be removed, and their objections answered; or else, it is not the bare chiding of them, or laying of blame upon them, that will pacifie the Soul, or satisfie doubts, and scruples.

And therefore I shall endeavour to remove these lets, and to answer these objections.

First then, the soul saith, what should I do serving of God; or waiting upon the Lord any longer? I have spent a great deale of time, and taken a great deal of paines, that way; but I doe not see, that I am the better for any thing that I have done; as these people, here, though they had offered many sacrifices,

1 Obj.

2 King 6.
33.

fices, yet afterward, began to look upon them, as *cast away*: We have offered many cattel, and creatures in sacrifice (say they,) but wee had better have sold them, and laid out the money some other way for our comfortable subsistence: So saith many a Soule, what shall I doe? I have prayed, and mourned, but *nothing the better*; my *Prayers* are not let into heaven, but shut out; my *almes* are not had in remembrance before God, but forgotten; my *teares* are spilt, and not bottled up; my *wants* are not supplied, my *desires* are not answered, my *corruptions* are not mortified: I have taken *much* paines, in attending upon the ordinances of God, but have
got

got little, or no good by them: And not only *ordina-ry*, but *extraordinary* means have I used ; I have joyned *fasting* to my prayers, and yet *all* will doe *nothing* ; I was amongst the people of God such a day, and such a day, in the duties of *hami- liation* ; but, alas ! I was *ne- ver the better* ; my heart was as hard at night, as it was in the morning : so that I had *better* have been about my calling, or the world ; for there I might have done, or got *some good* for the *body*, but here I got *no good*, either for *body*, or *soule* ; there I might have done *some good* to *others*, but here *no body* hath been the *better* for me, but (for ought I know) ra- ther the worse ; It may be I
have

have been a *Jonah*, or an *Achan*, amongst Gods people, to provoke the Lord to displeasure, and to cause him to withhold that mercy, from that *Assembly* I joyned with, which *they* might have had, if I had been from amongst them: but however, I have *deluded others*, and play'd the *hypocrite*, seeming better then I am, and fit to be amongst Gods people, which I was not; & have hardened my heart, and am (to be sure) never the better, if not much the worse.

These, and the like complaints, are commonly made by the people of God, as if his *service* were indeed altogether *vaine*. To this I answer divers wayes.

Answ. I.

That the service of God,
which

which a Soul does, may be may be profitable to *others*, though for the present, or in his own apprehension, little, or nothing so, to it *selfe*.

For the *Acts*, or parts of Gods service, are of *divers kinds*.

Some, in which the Lord, and master himself hath the *chiefest hand*, he being especially the *Agent*, and *we patients*: as hearing the word, receiving the sacrament, and duties of that nature.

Other some againe, there are, in which *man* is more said to be an *Agent*, then in the former; As in prayer, workes of charity, taking up the crosse, and the like.

Now its true, for the *first*, if a soul gets *no good* at them [*it selfe*,] at the word, at the sacrament

crament and the rest of that kind, *That service*, is like to be *in vaine altogether*. But for the latter, it will not hold, *wiz. in sufferings for Christ*, and the like, though a man may *seeme* to have lost, not his *labour* onely, but much other wayes, in his *estate*, *credit*, *liberty*, and the like, (in so much, that he may *suffer the spoyling of all his goods*, and himselfe dye in the Gaole,) yet this *service* may not be *in vaine*; For (besides his *own* gaine in spirituall respects) the *Church* of God may have more light, and liberty hereby, in after times.

Also of *prayer*, and seeking the Lord, the like may be said: for, as the Apostle saith, that *the parents lay up*
for

for the Children ; so doth one Christian for another. For these duties , are properly compar'd to sowing of seed : and Christ saith, *one soweth, and another reapeth.* And I doubt not, but many a christian, and parent, hath prayers hanging upon Gods file in heaven, *unanswered*, (for their Children and the Church of God) though made long agoe ; so that, [that] may seeme to be labour lost that was taken that way : But yet as *Ahasuerus*, call'd for the *Records* after a certaine time, and finding there, such a piece of service done by *Mordecai*, not yet rewarded, he forthwith gave him wages for his work, and bountifully rewarded him : So the Lord (in his due time) will

Joh. 4. 37.

Ester 6. 1.

will look over his files, (as I may so speak) and finding the *parents* prayers (made for the *childe*) and the *Christians*, prayers (made for the *Church* of God) hanging still *unanswered*, he will undoubtedly *return* them an answer *in a time accepted*.

And because a parent, or a christian does not receive an answer hereof (*presently*.) or wages for his work in the service of the Lord, or live to see others the better for it, shall he therefore conclude, It is a *vaine service*; or the work a *vaine work*? When a man hath beene at paines, & cost in *tilling*, & *sowing* of his ground, though hee doth not live to the *harvest*, to reape the crop *himselfe*, yet wil he not account his labour
lost,

Simil.

lost, because he can make his will of it; and his heires, executors, and such as he doth intirely love, shall be the better for it. Even so it is here, The Church may be the better, others the better for thy labour; And therefore this work and service, is not to be accounted vaine.

Secondly, I answer, that the Lord doth not alwayes pay his servants wages for the work they doe him, [*in ready mony*] (as they use to say,) but many times by way of exchange, giving of them something in *liem*, yet alwayes for the best unto them. Even as you pay your workmen, when they have wrought with you, and done you service, you doe not pay them (it may be) in
ready

Answer. 2.

Simil.

ready money, gold, silver, and the like; but with such commodities, as they stand in great need of, which happily are scarce, and rare, and such as they could not buy with their money, if they had had their wages paid them therein. Now if these servants should goe away, and exclaime on you, and on your service, that, because you did not pay them in ready money, as they expected; they should therefore say, that your service were a vaine service, and that they had wrought with you for nothing, and the like, would you take this well at their hands?

Why? yet, thus dost thou deale by the Lord; Thou attendest upon God in duties,

ties, and ordinances; in hearing, praying, and the like; and thou dost him some service: Now, thou expectest to be paid down at the *stub* (as it were) *in ready money*. That is to say, thou lookest to grow in parts, as, in knowledge, in quick apprehension, and ability of expression in conference, or prayer, as others doe: and because thou dost not so, thou art ready to *complaine*, that this *service of God is vaine*, and that thou hast but lost thy labour therein: Whereas, it may be, the Lord hath given thee, *something instead of these*, which is better and daintier, and which thou couldst not have purchased with these, if thou hadst never so much of
F them.

them. For instance, it may be he hath given thee a *tender conscience*, and an *humble heart*, instead of those other which thou didst expect.

Well; if he hath thus paid thee, I tell thee, he hath done thee *no wrong*: For these are things which thou couldst not have purchased with thy parts; were they never so great and high.

Ans. 3.

Thirdly, I answer, that thou canst not conclude, that the *service of God is in vaine*, though thou *thinkest* thy selfe never the better, or (*as yet*) beest never the better, for the *present*; unlesse also, thou art able to conclude, that thou *never shalt* be the better hereafter neither; which I am sure, thou

thou canst not possibly doe.

Suppose thy prayers (*as yet*) be not answered; art thou sure that they *never shall* be answered? though thy corruptions, be *not yet* subdued, nor Satan (*as yet*) troden under foot, how dost thou know, that they never shall?

Nay how dost thou know, but that *this delay*, may bee fully *satisfied for*, when the Lords time is *fully* come.

We find how *Moses* speaks to the people of the Lord in this manner; *who led thee through that great, and terrible wildernesse, wherein were fiery Serpents, and Scorpions, and drought, where there was no water, &c. that hee might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to doe thee good at*

Deut. 8. 15
16.

thy latter end. Mark that phrase well [*at thy latter end*] which imports the *time* of Gods shewing mercy to many, even of his own people, that they shall not have the good of Gods present dealings with them, *till their latter end.*

It may be, before this Message came from the Lord to this people, they began to *repent* them in part, of what they had done, in following of *Moses*, and putting themselves upon so many hardships, and think all to be but *labour lost*, and their service in obeying the Lords commands to be in vaine ; but now they are answered, and taken off from this, hearing that the *time* of their reward was not yet come, but that
verily

verily it would come, and that without faile; to wit, *in the latter end.*

So then, it's clear that a soul in obeying God, and in doing him service, may be led through a *wilderneffe*, where it may meet with serpents, scorpions, drought, and a great deale of hardship, and be *much disappointed* in its expectation, and desires: And yet the Lord, may *intend it good at the last*, and plentifully reward it, for all the service it doth for him. And therefore, let not any complaine *till* they have cause; *The patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever*; And, *verily there is a reward for the righteous*; And, *Tet a little while, and he that shall come will come,*

Pl. 9. 18

Pl. 38. 11.

Heb. 10.
37.

and will not tarry.

Have you never heard it rumor'd and reported, very commonly, and confidently, that such, or such a *ship* hath been quite cast away and *lost* ; and yet that *ship* hath come home afterwards *richly laden*. So tis oft' in Prayer, and other duties; and therefore be not overmuch discouraged, though you enjoy not the *present fruit of your labours* ? in *due time*, you shall reap if you *faint*.

Gal. 6. 9

And thus far is answer to these thoughts, and objections, that are in the people of God, from the *first ground* in *themselves*.

20th.

The *second ground* of this Feare followes, to be answered : Namely ; That *in- discernable*

discernable difference that is in themselves, betweene their serving, and not serving of God :

The Soul saith, surely, I cannot perceive that I am any whit *the better*, for all the service that I have done to the Lord ; For all my Prayers, hearing, christian communion and the like ; I am as well, when I ~~omit~~ serving of him, or when I am *slighty* in his service, as when I serve him *most*, and *best* of all ; I prosper *as well* in my businesse, and returne *as safe* home from my journey, when I set forth without seeking direction from the Lord, as when I do seek him before I goe out ; I *leepe as sweetly*, when I goe to bed without Prayer, as when I

do pray ; and so for other particulars : Therefore this serving of the Lord, seemes to be vaine.

Answ. I.

To this also I answer divers wayes. First, That it is *a sad thing*, that any of Gods people, should, *Try, and Tempt him* in this manner; to doe, as if they should say, Ile see what the Lord will doe for me without asking, and the like; that any who have *tasted how gracious the Lord hath beene unto them*, in a duty, or ordinance, that, they should in the least degtee, *willingly omit* such a duty againe, and that they should (to speak after the manner of men) *disappoint* the Lord thus. That when the Lord shall goe into thy Chamber,

or

or Closet; at the usuall time of Prayer, with his *ear* open to the Prayer, that thou hadst need to make him, that (then) thou shouldst not be there; but he must be forced to turne himselfe away, missing whom hee looked for: That when the Lord *bringeth* mercy in his hand (as it were) to bestow upon thee, that thou shouldst not be there to *receive* it, but he must be forced to carry his mercy back againe with him; and when he bringeth his *bottle* to put up thy *tears*, thou sendest him *empty* away? This I say is a very sad thing.

But secondly I answer, that if there be *no* difference in thine *outward* man, in thy estate, body, name,

Answer. 2.

F 5

and

and the like; yet there may be *great difference* in thine *inner man*, and soul; and I dare say, there is so.

Doth not thy *neglect* of duty, beget a *dislike* of duty? doth no *disuse* in Gods service, breed an *unknesse*, and an indisposition thereto.

I doubt not, but, if the heart be well observed, it will be acknowledged, that this is true, that it is thus; And is this nothing?

Answer. 3.

Thirdly, I would demand of those, that say, they can find *no difference* in themselves, between the time when they *serve* the Lord, and when they do *not serve* him, whether they doe, *never at no time* find any difference?

Sometimes (it may be) you find

find little or no difference, the Lord meets you not in duties, but you go away empty, with hardnesse in your hearts, and blacknesse in your bosomes, and the like; (as you conceive:) But is it [*alwayes*] thus? are you never answered in the joy of your soules? does the Lord never give you a good look, nor shew you a pleased face? If you have any, slight them not: are the consolations of God small unto you?

Or if you have none, yet, that thou art upheld in the way, and in the work of the Lord, to go on in his service, even this very thing is a great mercy; and is very like to be the fruit, and wages for the former work, and service thou hast done him.

And

Job. 15.
11.

And it is all one, whether the Lord doth give the soul what it would have *presently*, or strength to *persevere* in his wayes, till he doth meet, and answer it.

Of the *two*, the *last* is rather the *best*, because the soule honours God *most* by this.

Answer. 4.

Lastly consider, if thou hast such, and such things, (gifts or parts) in *as full a measure* when thou dost not serve God, as when thou dost serve him most exactly, yet thou canst not look upon them, as such *speciall mercies*, if they come not in the way of *seeking* and serving God. The very *table of wicked men* is made their *snare*, & the *prosperity of fooles* shall *slay* them.

Psal. 69. 22

Prov. 1. 32

2. There be also *thoughts* in the hearts of Gods people, about

about the *vanity of Gods service*, arising from some ground in *others*; for thus they reason; *Those* that have no care at all to serve God, or to attend upon the duties of his worship, yet they seeme to spred, and to fare as well, as those that serve him *most*, and *best* of all; and therefore the *serving of God* seemes to be in vaine.

Obj.

To this also divers answers may be made. As first; that there is *much difference* in the *maine*, and in that which ought *most* to be regarded: Though they may seeme to be as well in their *outward condition*, and for their *body*, yet not with their *soules*; for, they are not in Gods wayes, nor in the Road of his *best mercies*.

Ans. 1.

Secondly,

Answer. 2.

Secondly, that even those
outward, and common mercies
(which they have, who doe
not serve the Lord but are
carelesse therein) may bee
the fruit of, [*others*] *serving*
the Lord, though not of their
[*own.*] As for instance; thou
art an *husband*, and shouldst
(as Saint Peter speaks) *dwell*
with thy wife as a man of
knowledge, and be a *patterne*
for the whole family in *ser-*
ving the Lord; and yet it
may be, thou regardest not
these things; but goest to
bed like a beast without
Prayer, and yet sleepest qui-
etly, when thy poore wife
or *child* may be upon their
knees praying for thee. So
thou goest into the world
in the morning, and settest
out *journeyes*, without see-
king

seeking the Lord, and yet it may be prosperest, and returnest well : and why? it may be thy *Minister* Prayes for thee, and prevails for these mercies in thy behalfe, which else thou might'st goe without.

Laban fared the better for *Jacobs* sake. And *Potiphar*, and his family, sped the better for *Iosephs* serving the Lord.

A gracelesse child, may fare the better for the service which gracious Parents have done him. As the Lord saith of some. *They are beloved for the Fathers sake* : So may some children find temporal mercies, at the hand of God, for some service which was done him, by their parents.

As some great man, that hath

Gen. 30.
29.

Gen. 39. 3.

Ro. 11. 28.

Simil.

hath had a *servant* dwelling long with him, will many times shew kindnesse to the *child* of that servant. I care not (sayes he) if I doe so or so for him; his father was my man, or his mother was my maid, so many yeares, and was trusty, and faithfull in my service. So doth God in this case.

Ans. 3.

Thirdly, I answer that it is a grosse mistake, to think, that the *prosperity of this life*, is worthy of the name of a *reward* for Gods service: Those things which God gives as a *reward* for this, are *within the vaile*; which the eye of sense never saw, which the heart of man cannot possibly conceive of. And therefore, though those that doe not serve the Lord, have these things

things below, and thou, who do'st serve him, goest without them, yet being the Lord reserves a better reward for thee till afterward, complaine not.

You know that men of great estates, set servants on work, of divers kinds; some, that are but *dayes-men*, but others that are *hired servants*, or bound to them for a long time: Now, the first sort are paid at night, or at weekes end, three pence, or a groat a day, or some such small matter, and their Lords day dinner; and there's all they must looke for.

But as for the other, hee takes his wages by the lump, his Master takes charge of him, and makes provision for

Simil.

for him, not onely in health, and when he is haile and well, but in sicknesse too, allows him attendance, protects him against wrongs, vouchsafeth him the credit of his countenance, prefers him in marriage, and lets him have the lease of some good Farme, that he is the better for, all his dayes.

Now, shall *this* servant go, and complaine, that hee serves his Master *in vaine*, because he hath not such *petty-payments* as others have? His Master, may justly take this ill at his hand. So it is here; For what the Apostle saith, of the *momentany afflictions* of this present life, I may say, of the *momentany comforts* of this present life; They are not worthy of

against the evil servants cavil.

91

of that eternall reward, for serving the Lord, which hee reserved for those that are his; which is ready to be revealed in his time.

But besides all this, there is answer enough lying wide open in the three last verses of this Chapter, which might quiet, and still any soule for the present, that hath but the least measure of faith in truth. There you shall find, *For those that feared the Lord and spake often one to another, there was a book of remembrance written, they made up as his Jewels, were &c.* God putting a manifest difference between them that serve him, and that serve him not.

But now from this that hath been spoken in answer, and

Mal. 3. 16,
17, 18. —

Obj.

and for satisfaction, unto those of Gods people, who are of tender consciences, full of feares, and much discouraged in the wayes of God; happily *carnall hearts* (from hence) will be ready to *reply*, and plead for themselves after this manner. Well; now we are in some more hope of our selves then formerly we were. You told us in the beginning, that it was the property of *carnall hearts*, and such as are wicked to account the *service of God vaine* and unprofitable; and all that while we were much *afraid* of our selves; because we cannot deny (for our hearts) but that secretly we doe so. But *since*, you have said, that *Gods own people* may be *guilty*

ty of this too; And therefore now againe we begin to have some better hopes of our selves then we had, and to think that our condition may not be so bad, though we be guilty hereof.

To this I answer, that there is a wide difference, between those thoughts that are in the hearts of the godly, about the vanity of Gods service, and those that are in the hearts of the wicked; which is especially, shewed in these particulars, which being opened, will afford a full answer to this objection. And which also may serve for markes of tryall to discover, which are carnall hearts, and which are gracious; which is the next thing to be shewed, and then proceed.

Difference between the thoughts of the godly, and wicked, about the vanity of Gods service.

First

i Diffe-
rence.
or trial.

First then, though there be some such thoughts as these, in the hearts of the godly, touching the vanity of Gods service, as if it were labour lost that is taken therein; yet *these thoughts are onely injected*, and cast in by Satan, and doe onely *swimme*, and flutter up and downe in the minde, but are not *seated and settled* in the heart; though the soule makes some question about this, yet it is not fully settled and perswaded of it, that so it is. But the *carnall* heart, and the wicked, is; for they have it *rooted*, and *fastened* as a *firme principle* in them, that thus it is.

Now, there is a wondrous wide *difference*, betweene *Doubtings*, and *Resolutions*:
and

and they are easie to be discerned by such a one, as is not willing to be deceived.

The second difference is this; namely, that though there be *some* such thoughts as these, in *some* of Gods people, yet they are not touching the *service of God it selfe*, but about [*their*] particular service of God: They doe not think that it is in vaine [*for others*, for every body, or in it *selfe*] to serve God, but all their feare is, that it is in vaine, [*to them.*]

They doe not make the least question, but that there are *those* that do speed in Prayer, reap much profit by the ordinances, and are much the *better* for serving the Lord. Onely, they say, that [*they themselves*] are never

2 Difference or triall.

ver the better, they thinke
[they] heare, and pray, and
doe all *in vaine*.

Whereas *Carnall hearts*,
and such as are naught, they
doe not accuse, or condemne
their own particular serving
of God, but the service of
God it selfe in generall. As
here in the text. *You have
said it is vaine, or a vaine
thing to serve the Lord.*

Now, there is a wide dif-
ference in this also; easie to
be discerned: and let every
soule, try it selfe, by this
signe.

Thirdly, though there be
such *thoughts*, as were spo-
ken of, to be found in the
hearts of Gods people, yet
they are not such as *beat
them off* from the use of
meanes; reading, hearing,
Praying,

2 Diffe-
rence.
or trial.

praying, and the like ; but they wil still serve the Lord, though the feare the losse of their labour in their serving of him, though they feare they pray but in Vaine, yet they will pray still and so for other duties.

Many poore soules have complained much of their unprofitableness in Gods service, that they have but lost their labour, and all in vaine which they have done, and the like ; whereupon (for their triall) they have beene asked after this manner, why, doe you not then give over ? why doe you heare, or pray still ? To which they have made answer, that they could doe no otherwise : though I feare it is but in vaine to pray, yet I cannot but pray,
G heare,

heare, conferre, and the like; *Thus* another, and *thus* another saith.

So, that it hath beene evident, that there was some *Principle* in them; that hath carryed them on, in the wayes of God, and in his service, notwithstanding the sence of their former unprofitablenesse in the same. Or if [*at a time*] or for a while, they have beene beaten off, and so *desisted*, yet it hath not beene out of *distast* of the *duty*, so much as their *own* unfitnesse, and indisposition thereunto: though yet they themselves may, and do *conceive*, that they doe really *disaffect* the duty it selfe. As a *distempered* stomack may seeme to loath good meate, whilst it is *distemperd*, and
even

Simil.

even that which it *naturally* loves very well. And so it is in this case.

Whereas a *carnall heart*, is *willing* to admit of this, as a pretence for his *sloth*, that the service of God is *in vain*; that so, with the more peace and quiet, he *may* sit still, and *fold up his hands*; and so he doth.

So that *his thoughts* about the *vanity* of the service of God, doe beate him *off*, and *out* of the service it selfe. And this is a great difference.

Fourthly there is *difference* in the *effect* of these *thoughts*. For in the hearts of the Godly they are soone *followed* (if not *attended* for the present) with much *sorrow* and *selfe-shaming*, as in the 73 *Psal.* Comparing the 13
G 2 verse

4 Difference.
or trial.

3. Use of
Caution.

Caution 1.
to the
wicked.

verse with the 22 verse. Whereas they that are carnall doe not thus : as for the unGodly it is not so with them: They are hardly humbled for words, or actions, against God, much lesse for thoughts.

The next use to be made of this point, is, an use of Caution for Warning.

And that } 1 to the wicked
 } 2 to the Godly,
 } 3 to all in general.

First to the wicked ; to warne them, ever hereafter, to take heede of this sinne, of censuring the service of God, for a vayne service; Or them of Folly, or losing their Labour, which keepe this service, or worke hard in it.

Know, that though it be in vaine to you, (as indeed it Can be no otherwise, as you
goe

go to worke) yet doe not
thinke that it is in vayne, to
all others.

Though *you* get no good by
the word you heare, or are
never the better, by the pray-
ers you make, and the like,
yet do not thinke, but that
there is good to be gotten by
them, and that others are the
better for them.

Because a *tradesman* (out of
his bad husbandry) doth *not*
thrive in his trade, shall he
goe and condemne the trade
it selfe? or censure those of
folly, that drive such a
trade, as that is. Nay rather
let him mend his husbandry,
and follow his trade in a bet-
ter manner, and then he may
thrive, though hitherto he
could not: So it is here. For
men are ready to condemne

Simil.

this trade of Godlynesse, and to suspect the worst by the service of God, because *they* profit no more by duties, and ordinances; whereas the fault is not in the ordinances, but in *themselves*; they prepare *not* their hearts to seeke the Lord, they serve him not for *matter, Manner, measure, end*, as they should doe, which if they did, they might soone finde it were *not in vaine to serve God.*

Caution
to the
godly.

Secondly, it is for *Caution*, and warning, unto the people of God, that they *take heed* how they harbour such *thoughts* as these are, of the service of God. For (as a Divine saith) though you cannot hinder the birds from *flying over your heads*, yet you may keepe them, from

from making Nests in your haire ; so, though such thoughts as these may arise, or be cast in by Satan, yet suffer them not to settle upon your hearts. This is the brand of a carnall heart. O let it not be set upon any of you, that have any truth of grace in you.

If the Devill can but fasten such thoughts upon any of you, as to make you thinke or feare, that the service of God is in vayne, he will easily prevaile with you, either wholly to forsake it, or else to be very remisse, and negligent in it.

If a man be sick and weak, and he be prejudic'd against men, and means, and perswaded that no physitian, or physicke, can doe him good:

Simit.

that man is in the high way to death; for either, he will *not meddle* at al with meanes, or else *stray* from the rules that are prescribed him; and then, (though it be *not* in vayne to take physicke yet) to be sure he will *make it* in vaine.

And the same will people doe for their *soules*, if they come to entertaine a *prejudice* against the service of God.

Heb. 10.
35.

We finde this to be the counsel of the Apostle. *Cast not away your confidence which hath great recompence of reward.* It seemes then, that, that, which is of great worth, and will at length be very profitable, is in danger to be *cast away* by the people of God, as *vaine*, and nothing worth.

It

It is the case, and condition of many a poore soule, to stand staggering, and remaine doubtfull, as not knowing what to thinke of of it selfe; *one while* it hath a doore of hope set open to it, it that some glimps & glimring of the *light of Gods countenance*, and some confidence of his love, and mercy, which doth much refresh it; *another while* that doore is shut, and there is nothing but *darknesse*, and feare in the soule: and it suspects its former confidence to be but meere *delusion*, that it was mistaken, and the like; and and all on the sudden, the soule is ready to *cast away* that confidence, as nothing worth.—Oh, but (saith the Apostle) hold your hand,

and be well advised what you doe : be not so prodigall to cast away that in a pang, or pittish moode, which you were so long a getting, and cost you so deare. *Prove*, and try your confidence if you will, nay, 'tis needfull you should doe so, but *cast it not away* : Or if Satan wring your hold out of your hand, and your confidence out of your heart, by the strength of any violent temptation, then indeed you are to be pittied, and your condition, with much Christian compassion to be laid to heart ; But for you, to stand in your owne light, and to throw away such a stay to your soules, by a willfull refusall of that mercy, and denyall of that grace, which the
Lord

Lord hath wrought in you
and given you some experience
of, and that out of the
pride of your hearts, because
you cannot finde a ground
of your holding fast of a
confidence [*in your selves*]
but must live upon free
grace; or out of discontent-
tednesse of spirit, that be-
cause you cannot affirme,
that full assurance of heaven,
and Gods love, that you
would have, therefore you
will have *none at all*; because
you may not *carve* your
selves, and have *whole loaves*,
therefore you will scorne
crummes, and cast away pieces:
If thus you doe in stead of
pitty, you shal deserve blame.
And as little as this confidence,
& waiting upon God, seemes
worth, which you slight, and
are

are casting away, as worth nothing; yet beleeve me, tis *not in vaine* to hold fast upon a promise, *something* will come at last, though all seeme but *lost* for the present. And therefore *cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompence of Reward.*

Caution
to all in
general.

Lastly, it is usefull *for all in generall*, to warne every one, to take heed of making voyd, and *wayne* the service of God *to himselfe*.

We have scene, and heard the evill of this sinne, of accusing the service of God, for a *vaine service*, and how much wrong they doe the Lord, and *themselves*, that cast such an aspersiō, and unjust imputation upon the service of God: But now, if that
should

should become, really so to us, which is *not so*, in it selfe, nor to others; and that, whilst we blame others, for saying it is in vaine, we should be those, that should make it *vaine* to our selves, this would prove hard, and sad in conclusion.

How will this make up the mouths of carnall loose libertines, when they come at the judgement seat; when those that would never spend time, nor take paynes in the service of God, shall fare, & speed as well as they that spent, and took much time therein, when those that would not be brought to make any shew of goodnesse, or take up the practice of any duties at all, shall fare as well, as those that had a faire

faire forme of Godlinesse, and were very abundant in holy duties.

When they that had no prayer in their families, so much as once in the weeke, or month, or yeare, shall speed as well, and alike, with those that had prayer twice a day; in a word when those that take their fill in the pleasures of sin, that cast off the feare of the almighty, saying depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes; That were servants to their lusts, and not to God but run on in all excesse of riot, in sinning with high hands, and stiffenecks, shall see them thrust out from God that wore his livery, call'd him master, and did much work in his service; Oh how wide will

will it open their mouthes?
 And (if it were possible to
 laugh in Hell) how would
 it make them laugh and tri-
 umph; why, certainly, it
 will be thus with very many
 to whom the service of God,
 shall be but a *vaine service*;
 and they shall lose all the
 time, and paynes that they
 have spent & taken therein;
 see *Mat. 7 chap. in the, 22 and*
23 verses. and Luke 13. 26.
 Where you shall finde, that
 many, who have beene in
Christs company, and stood
 in *Christs roome*, and done
Christs worke, shall yet be
 disclaimed by him, and ex-
 cluded from him at the last
 day; And therefore what
 need is there that we looke
 well to it, that though this
 service be not *vaine in it selfe*
 yet

Directions that
the service of
God may
not be in
vaine.

Isa 50. 11.

Direction
I.

yet that it prove *not vaine to us.*

Which that it may not do,
I shall desire to lay downe
some *directions* in way, of
prevention, which being fol-
lowed, will undoubtedly
make our *worke*, and labour
in the service of the Lord
profitable unto us; but, with-
out which, could we doe
never so *much*, and that (in
shew) never so *well*, yet
should we be accounted but
evill servants; and this is all
we shall have at Gods hand
at last, to lye downe in sorow.

The first thing that a soule
must doe, that would not
have the service of the Lord
prove in vaine to him, is, To
get into Covenant with God,
and to be at agreement with
him, for whom we do work :
I do

I doe not meane to Covenant for *wages*, and what thou shalt have for thy *work*, as if, otherwise thou wer't in danger to have nothing, for there is no feare of that; but onely *Covenant* with him, to be his *servant*, to be one, whom he may please to owne, and looke upon as one that doth especially belong unto him: This is to be in *inward* Covenant with God: for you are to know, that there is a secret league, and Covenant which is made, and passeth between God, and the soule, at its first conversion. In which the Lord [*for his part*] makes tender and promise of free grace, and mercy, to the poore soul, seeing it selfe lost and undone: And the

the soul [*for its part*] being glad of God, and mercy, upon such faire termes as he propounds it upon, *accepts* thereof ; and so the Covenant is struck, the soule is willing to become the Lords, and to give up it selfe to him, and his service wholly and freely. And the Lord [*for his part*] is willing to *accept* of that soul, and of such service as it is, and shall be able, to doe for him ; to *assist* him in his undertakings, to *overlooke* his faylings, and to *reward* his endeavours. And so for ever after this, the Lord lookes upon this soule as a *servant* of his, and, as *set on worke* by him, and so intends the *rewarding* of him as his servant ; which before he doth

doth not, but saith as *Esay*,
1.12. *who hath required these*
things at your hands ; I doe
not deny, but that, I doe re-
quire them, but not of you,
and I will give a reward for
the doing of them, but not
to you. So in the 50 *Psal.* 16
verse, *unto the wicked, God*
saith, what hast thou to doe to
declare my statutes, or that
thou shouldst take my Cove-
nant in thy mouth ? where
had you any commission to
meddle with my worke ? It
was an answer which they
gave, in the 20 of *Mat.* 6 verse
why they stood so long idle be-
cause no man had hyred them,
as if they should say, we had
as good doe nothing, as to
worke before we are hyred:
and it is most certainly true
here, that till a soule be a-
greed &

Job. 9. 29.

Vers. 20.

agreed (in the sence before mentioned) with God, It shall have *no reward* for the work it does, but loseth al its labour ; As *Iob* saith, if *I be wicked, why then labour I in vaine ?* so surely, all the labour that a wicked man takes, whilst he is wicked, and in the state of *sinne* and nature, is but lost, he does but labour in vaine. The Prophet saith, Psal 139. *Thine [enemies] take thy Name in vaine ;* which holds very firme in this sence ; namely, That whilst people remaine *enemies* to God, and are not truely reconciled to to him through Christ, they take his name (word, Sacrament, and all they meddle withall) *in vaine.* Should they heare, pray, doe suffer
or

or performe, never so many duties, of the Lords service, yet all would prove *in vaine unto them*, and they should never have comfort, nor profit, by any thing they doe.

It is a great deale of *time*, that some spend, of *paines*, that they take, and *cost* that they are at, about the duties of Gods service, who yet, if they goe on, as they have begun, will *lose all* at the last.

Oh ! therefore let me prevaile with so many of you this day, as never tooke this course, now, to enter upon it, get you home, enter into your chambers, and *commune with your hearts*, about your conditions, and this worke ; labour to see your
misery

misery by nature, and sinne,
and so long as you stand
in *enmity* with God,
and God with you, begge
(as for more then your
lives) to be at *peace* with
him and be glad of reconcili-
ation with him upon any
termes ; you may goe on
still, in your old way of for-
mality, if you please, with-
out taking this course, as
long, and twice as long (if
you live as you have done,)
thinking, that if you be dili-
gent in duties, and painefull
in the service of the Lord,
especially with honest
hearts, as you call them, that
then you shal not lose your
labour, but that God will
reward you, for the service
you doe : and it may be that
some of you, may intend so
to

to doe ; notwithstanding what ever hath beene said against it : and so they may, if they please, to their shame, and heart-smart, but if this be the way to true peace, or profit, the Lord hath not spoken by me.

And when they have wearied themselves, in this their way, and misse, what they looke for, (which they will most certainly doe, if they looke for any good,) then will they acknowledge the truth, and necessity of this counsell, and (when it is too late,) will bewayle, that they tooke it not in time.

Secondly, if you would not have the service of God prove a vaine service, then *take heed of a flighty spirit*, in the performing of it ; and of
having

Direction
2.

having low, and *meane* thoughts, of those duties, that thou undertakest the doing of, but labour for *high* and *pretious* thoughts, of the duties of this service, and of the ordinances of God, which thou comest to be a partaker of, that thou may'st looke upon the service of God, as *honourable*, and *much* *desirable* service, and the parts, and duties of this service, as *very profitable*, & as those means, which the Lord hath ordained for thy *great good*. To look upon prayer, as a profitable ordinance, and meanes, very forcible with God, to breake open his treasure, and to obtaine all needfull mercies by.

So for the word, the Sacrament, and the rest, many there

there be, which performe many of the duties of Gods service, but yet come not with *such thoughts* as these are, but looke upon them as *meane* ordinarie things; and that because they know not the worth, and pretiousnesse of them, and never found, or got any great good by them, when as the ground thereof, is, in themselves; they come with *low thoughts*, and slighty estimation, to the ordinances, and then no marvell they find them *vaine*, and unprofitable to them.

Thirdly, he that would not have the service of God in vaine unto him—must looke that he be *faithfull* in the doing of it.

And this *faithfulness* is to be shewed, in these five
H things.

Direction
3.

Faithful-
nesse in
Gods ser-
vice to be
shewed in
5. things.
Careful-
nesse.

*things Carefulnesse, Diligence,
Sinceritie, Beliefe, and Perse-
verance.*

First it is to be shewed in
*carefulnesse, of universalitie
of obedience*; that a man be
carefull in attending, upon
all Gods wayes, and in doing
all that worke, that God sets
him about.

He is not a *faithfull* ser-
vant, that will *pick*, and
choose his worke, to doe one-
ly *that* which likes him, and
leave the rest: so, neither is
he a *faithfull* servant to God
that will doe onely *some*, not
all: that will attend upon
God in *some* duties, and or-
dinances, but omit *other-
some*, and that can be con-
tent to put his *hand* to Gods
worke, but not to his *neck* or
his *back*, to his *croffe*, or bur-
then;

then; *doing-worke* will down
but not *suffering-worke*.

Well thinke better of it,
and baulke *none* of Gods
worke, but take it as it lies
in order, and comes ; for
that part of Gods service
that thou *neglectest*, may be
that, in the doing whereof,
the Lord may intend to
shew thee *much mercy*, and to
give thee a reward for *that*,
and *other* service together.

If it be *secret prayer*, or
such a duty, that thou livest
in the neglect of, thou
may'st bereave thy selfe of
much good in the *neglect* of
it: for as God meets one in
some dutie, rather then in
other-some, so, that may
be *that* very dutie that God
may intend to Communi-
cate more mercie to thee in,

then *any other*. So the like may be said of *sufferings*, for the Lord hath let out, more of himselfe sometimes in a *prison*, then any other way.

Psal. 119.6

And therefore as *David* shewed his *faithfulnesse* in having respect to all Gods *commandments*; so let us.

Diligence
2.

Secondly, this *faithfulnesse*, lies in doing the worke of the Lord *diligently*, when the soule puts out its selfe in what it undertakes for God. A man is not therefore a faithfull servant to his Master, because he puts his hand to *every worke*, and shunneth none, if yet, he *slubbereth over* his worke, in a lazy, and slothful manner, and doth none as he ought to doe: but the doing of it to his *utmost*, sheweth his *faithfulnesse* as well

well as his doing of it *at all*:
and this is that which the
Lord calls for : *Not slothfull
in businesse, fervent in Spirit,
serving the Lord.*

*Rom. 12.
11.*

So in another place, *what
ever thy hand, findeth to doe,
doe it with thy might* ; if it be
not a duty, meddle not with
it, doe it not *at all* ; but if it
be a duty. & a duty to God,
what *exactnesse* in the doing
of it can be sufficient ? and
therefore doe such a duty,
with thy *might*, pray with
thy *might*, heare with thy
might , stand for God
with thy *might*, and so for
any other duty. The want
of this, is the bane of a great
many duties, and of much
service, which are made
void, and unprofitable, by
this very meanes : nay in-
stead of a reward, they shal

Eccles. 9. 10

Jer. 48. 10.

have wrath, and vengeance for their wages : according to that of the Prophet *Jeremy*, *curst be he, that doth the worke of the Lord negligently, or deceitfully*; that might do it better then he does, but doth not put out himselfe. Or that seemes to do it otherwise then he doth it in deed; seeming very zealous God, when there is neither for life, nor heat within; *Burning lippes and a wicked heart*, (like Solomons plate) *a pot-sheerd covered with silver drosse*. Oh, heare and feare?

Pro. 26. 23

Sincerity.
3.

The third part of this *faithfulnessse*, is *sincerity*, and *uprightness* in heart: which is, when a soule doth the service of God, and the duties of it, in *obedience* to his *command*, aiming at him, and his

his glory, in the workes, and duties, that it doth performe.

The Lord would have servants looke through their [*earthly*] masters in the service they doe for them, and and to have an eye, to *Christ* in what they doe, who is the chiefe Master of all : but, much more then, ought he to be especially eyed, and aymed at in those actions, which are *immediately* done unto *himselfe* ; true, the eye of *man*, cannot pierce the heart, to diserne, the intention of that, but the *Lords* doth : For however a servant may be accounted faithfull, when as he doth not purely looke at his *Master*, in the service he doth, (for his *Master*, cannot see his heart) yet he cannot

Eph. 5. 5.

not be, nor is accounted a faithfull servant, with the Lord, unlesse he lookes more at the Lord, then at *himselfe* or any other. In the 7 of *Zach.* 5. the Lord puts this question home unto them, *did yee at all fast to me*; and doubles it againe, *even to me?* that whereas they might be ready and overforward to make answer for themselves, and say, Yes Lord, we did, what we did, *to thee*, he replies; *even to me?* are you sure you did it *to me?* that you looked purely at *me &c.*

The want of *this* makes void, and vaine, our worke, and prevents that reward, that else we might have; as is cleare from *Mat.* 6. 5, and 16 verse; as if the Lord had said

said, it you looke not at *me* in your worke, why should you looke at *me* for wages, for the worke you doe?

The fourth branch of this faithfulnessse, required, in the service of God, to make it profitable, is *Beleeving*: which is, that when the soule hath proved it selfe to be in covenant, with God, (according to the first direction,) that then it stirres up it selfe, to exercise *faith* in the beleeving, Applying, and pressing, of those *promises*, which it hath right, and title to, as touching *assistance*, *acceptance*, *answering*, *rewarding* and the like.

The Apostle shewes the absolute necessity of *faith*, even in the exercise of it, to be in those that approach
nigh

Faith, or
Believing.

4.

Heb. II. 6.

Jam. I. 6, 7

nigh to God, in any service of his, as in prayer;—Saint James shewes, that such an one, as doth not pray in faith, without wavering, must not looke to receive any thing, as wages for his worke, from the Lord, though he may receive much from man, rewards, and applause &c.—Yet from the Lord, he must looke for none; if he doe, he is but deceived, and so shall bee.

Matth. 9:
28, 29.

The Lord saith, to them that come to him, as he said as he said to those *blind men* what? doe you come to me for sight? according as you beleeve, so shall you speed, &c.

I am perswaded, that if these men, had come to our Saviour in an ordinary, formal way, led by the example of

of others, (that because they saw others that were blind, and lame, goe to Christ, therefore they would goe too,) they might have gone away, as blind as they came, for any sight, or benefit, that they should have had from him. And so, if people, goe to God in duties, [as in prayer] in an *ordinary formal way*, because it is the order and fashion to goe to God, and pray, in time of want, they may goe often enough, and pray long enough, ere they shall obtaine, and worke till they be weary in the service of God, ere they get any good reward for it : yea though a man be a *beleever*, and hath that singular gift, and grace, of faith in him, yet this is not enough

enough unlesse he doth,
stirre up this gift, and grace,
so, as to have the *use* and *ex-*
ercise of it, even in the time of
working, and doing God
service; for a *habite* is onely
so farre of use, and profitab-
le, as it is brought forth in-
to *act* and exercise. Expe-
rience shewes, that the same
soule, which seemes *one day*,
to worke for nothing, and to
labour *in vaine*, with God,
in the duties of his service;
another day, or by another
dnty is sent *loaden away*, full
of the desires of its soule,
and thinkes it selte abun-
dantly rewarded; the rea-
son will be found, to be from
hence, (if it be well looked
into,) that *faith* was *more*
exercised, at one time, then
at another. If therefore
thou

thou wouldest not have, the service of the Lord, and the duties of it, to be *in vaine* unto thee, then worke in *faith*

Last of all, this *faithfulness* consisteth, and is to be shewed, in *perseverance*, holding on without fainting; Be *faithfull* unto the death, that is, in persevering to the last; for thus *faithfulness* is shewed; he is *not* accounted, a *faithfull* servant, that *gives over* his work before it be done, nor he *faithfull* to God, or his own soul, that *gives over* before he speed; *We waite upon the Lord untill he have mercy upon us*; so should a Christian resolve, not to give over, or away from God without an answer. I doe not deny, but

a

Perseverance. 5.

Rev. 2. 10.

Psal. 123. 2.

1 Cor. 4. 5.

a Christian may be held off, and delayed in his suite, and service, that he may, even make some question, whether he hath not quite lost his labour; whether ever his prayers shall be answered, and his service rewarded, or no; for all may seeme to be in vaine. Oh! but stay a while, and *Iudge nothing before the time*; much lesse this; to say, or thinke, that the Lord will be so hard, and unfaithfull, as not to reward your labour; for the full and *set time*, of the Lords payment, is not yet come.

I wish, that well knowne place, in *Mat. 24 13*, were as wel considered of, as known; — *He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved*. In which words, amongst ma-

ny

ny things considerable, there be especially two, for our present purpose, the *condition* of the promise, and the *promise*, it selfe.

Perseverance is the *dutie* required, in *all* the *parts* of Gods service, and the Lord is not tyed, to give any *reward*, or make payment, till *this* *dutie*, or *condition* be performed : the *Labourers* that had wrought in the *vineyard*, were not called to take their *payment*, till the *evening*, and end of the day.

Mat. 20.

True ; sometimes the master of the field, will come in amongst his harvest men, about *noone*, or some other time of the day, and give them *a largeesse*, for their *incouragement*, over and above, their wages ; but how

how ever, at *night* they shall have their reward *without faile*; and they have no cause to complaine, if they stay till then, and have no more then their wages; even so is it here, the Lord, is pleased sometimes to come [*in*] verry sweetly, to a soule, whilst 'tis at the work, & labouring in his service, at the word, in a prayer, in a sacrament, or the like, & gives it some inklings of his love, and sealings of his spirit, which are as *Largeesses* to the soule, that glad the heart, and doe much incourage it in the wayes and worke of God: &c.—But you must know, that this is an *over-plus* of his love, which though he doth *sometimes* bestow, yet *not alwayes*, for it is the portion, even of *some* that fear the Lord, to walk

in darknes, & see no light; for the Lord, will be left free [in this,] and it is more, then he will make promise of, that there may be no ground of complaint to any: onely the certaine, and standing wages is, *salvation*; and this, he bindes himselfe by Covenant, to give, in that forenamed place, he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved; as if he should have said, if there doe come any thing over, and beside what I promise, and good may it doe you, take it, and be thankfull: onely this is that you may trust to: [*salvation.*] He shall be saved, and will not this wages be sufficient; hath he any cause, to say, that the service of God is a vaine service, that shall have this at the last? how little soever,

Isa. 50. 10

Mat. 24. 13.

he hath for the *present*, he knoweth not what *salvation* is, that thinks it will not: surely if thou wert as fore a labourer as ever wrought for God, and shouldst beare the *burthen and beate of the day*, yet shouldst *all thy dayes*, eat in *darknesse*, and never have good looke from God, nor any incouragement in his worke, yet this *penny of salvation*, at the *night* of death, and those things that accompany the same, would be *wages sufficient*; therefore cease thy complaints, and persevere in thy endeavours.

Thus have I at large shewed you what you must doe, if you would not have the *service of God* to be made void, and *vaine to you*.

I Get into Covenant with God. 2 take

2. Take heed of a *slighty* spirit in the service of God.

3. Looke well to your hearts, that they be found *faithfull* in the mayne; especially in those five particulars : In *Carefulnesse*, in *Diligence*, in *Sincerity*, in *Beliefe*, and in *Perseverance*.

And now give me leave in the *Closure* of all, to speake to you, as *David* spake to the people 1 *Chro.* 29. 5. *Who now is willing [among you] to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord ?* shall I helpe the Lord to never a servant more by this dayes worke ? Believe it Friends, you'l never meet with a *better* Master ; to be sure, you'l never meet with so *good* a master, if you should travell to the utmost parts of the Earth.

It's

It's held (indeed) as a *discourtesie* in the world, and a *poynt of dishonesty*, to with or procure away a servant from *one* master to *another*. But I wish with al my heart, I could this day, procure some of the *worlds*, the *Devills* or *sinn's* servants, to become the true and faithfull servants of the most high God.

For *my part*, I would be willing to venture the displeasure of their *old Masters*.

And you, for *your part*, I dare say, would be highly thankfull unto me, for wishing you to *such* a service.

If I could perswade any soule heare, to leave its *old drudgery*, and to accept of the *service of God*, thou wouldst
soone

soone be ready to say, as
David said to *Abigail*, *Blessed*
be the Lord God of Israel
which hath sent thee this day
to meete me; And blessed be thy
advice, blessed be thou; For I
was even wearying my self
in a way of vanity, I was
serving the worst master, and
doing the worst work in the
world, I was about to re-
ceive the worst wages that
ever poore creature receiv-
ed: for the wages of sin is death
And therefore blessed, and
for ever blessed, be that God
that hath sent forth a mes-
senger to stop me in that
way, to let me see the vanity
of that old service, in which
formerly I tooke so much de-
light and to perswade my
heart to delight in that new
service

1 Sa. 25.
32. 33.

service of the Lord, which formerly I judged as vaine, and fruitlesse.

Gen. 9:127.

Well friends be perswaded this day, (and the Lord perswade you) *to dwell in the tents of Shem.* The Lord perswade you to accept of his reasonable service, be not afraid of it, there is all the reason in the world you should serve him. Tis true, there are strange reports that goe about of this service: *Tis a way that is every where spoken against,* Goe amongst them that have much *meanes* of knowledge, and much knowledge by the *meanes*, and they speake against it there, *are any of the Rulers,* of the scribes, and pharisees so forward in the service of God. Go amongst them

Joh. 7:48.

them that are ignorant, and they speake against it there, as if it were the vilest drudgery in the world; whereas, the Apostle sayes, its perfect freedome; if the sonne make you free, then are you free indeed. Beleeve it, when you come to dy, you will have more comfort, by one week spent in this service, then in many years spent in the service of sinne, and Satan.

Be perswaded therefore to accept of the service of God this day; As he makes a gracious profer to entertaine you, be content to accept of it with all thankfulnessse, take Gods Festing penny, receive his earnest, subscribe to the indentures of his Covenant; And then the match is made betwixt
God

2 Cor. 3. 17

Ioh. 8. 36.

Psal. 18.
the title.

God and your soules, according to that remarkable Prophecy, Esay, 44, 5. *One shall say, I am the Lords: and another shall call himselfe by the name of Iacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand, unto the Lord and Surname himselfe by the name of Israell.* And this was that which David preferred above the Chiefe flower in his Crowne even to be call'd the servant of the Lord, rather then a Lord of servants. Let this be the utmost ambition of each gracious soule, that it may say as he did, Psal. 116. 16. *Oh Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the sonne, of thy handmayd; thou hast loosed my bonds.*

To every such faithfull servant shall that gracious pro-

against the evil servants cavil.

promise of our great Lord,
and Master, made good, *Iob:*
12. 26 If any man serve me, let
him follow me, and where I am
there shall also my servant be:
if any man serve me, him will
my Father honour.

Therefore to conclude, let
me exhort you as *Ioshua* did
the people. Now feare the
Lord, and serve him in sinceri-
ty, and in truth; I hope it seems
not evill to any of you to serve
God, but you will choose the
Lord for your master, and each
one for himselfe, resolve,
and say with him, (whatso-
ever others doe) *as for me,*
and my house, we will serve the
Lord

What say yee; (before I
goe hence) what answer
shall I returne to him that
sent me? shall I returne the
I same

The Good Masters Plea,

same answer the people
gave to *Ioshua* (the Lord
perswade your hearts to the
same height of resolution)
*God forbid that we should for-
sake the Lord, to serve other
Gods.*

*The Lord our God will we
serve, and his voyce will we
Obey.*

FINIS.



A
TABLE
OF

The maine things
contained in this fol-
lowing Treatise.

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1. Propounded.
2. Proved.
3. Cleared.
4. Applied.

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2. *Why they doe so judge. (B.)*

(A.)

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The I able.

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(B.)

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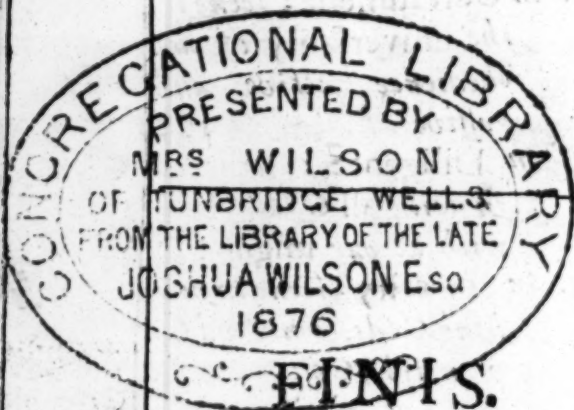
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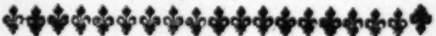
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